

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2019 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-052-2019

Draft No.: 2

Committee: TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Date: 10/10/2019

Action: FAV(A)

REPORT: Favorable with amendments, 3-0: Council Members Turner, Dernoga and Glaros. Absent: Anderson-Walker and Taveras

The TIEE Committee convened on October 10, 2019 to review CB-52-2019, which proposes the prohibition of the sale, distribution or provision of non-compostable straws and stirrers by food service businesses in the County by July 1, 2020. The proposed ban includes grocery stores and supermarkets. Exemptions are provided for pre-packaged beverages (with straw already attached) and reusable straws made of metal or rigid plastic. The County Department of the Environment (DOE) is designated as the responsible enforcement agency, which is also required to conduct an education and outreach campaign prior to utilizing the authority to issue fines on January 1, 2021.

The committee received testimony from the Sierra Club, the Maryland Restaurant Association, the County Health Department and the County Department of the Environment. The Health Department suggested allowing a collaboration with DOE for inspections, as is done for the polystyrene ban. The Sierra Club expressed concerns regarding the definition of “compostable” and the MRA suggested more attention be given to the availability of alternatives that will comply with this law and existing standards.

The following amendments were accepted by the committee:

- 1) Expanded definition of compostable
- 2) Exemption for individuals with disabilities
- 3) Additional language related to the legislative intent (proposed by the Sierra Club)
- 4) Addition of retail to the list of establishments impacted by the ban

Staff was directed to prepare the language amendments 2 and 3. The County Executive’s Office was requested to determine if there is an issue with designation of funds generated from fines to the County’s recycling program. The Office of Audits & Investigations indicated the legislation may have a minimal fiscal impact on the County related to the cost of the required education and outreach campaign.

After the review and discussion, the Committee voted favorably on CB-52-2019 as amended by a vote of 3-0.